Mammograms

Not just once, but for a lifetime

What is a mammogram and why should I have one?

A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast. It can find breast cancer that is too small for you or your doctor or nurse to feel. Studies show that if you are in your forties or older, having a mammogram every 1 to 2 years could save your life.

How do I know if I need a mammogram?

Talk with your doctor about your chances of getting breast cancer. Your doctor can help you decide when you should start having mammograms and how often you should have them.

Why do I need a mammogram every 1 to 2 years?

As you get older, your chances of getting breast cancer get higher. Cancer can show up at any time — so one mammogram is not enough. Decide on a plan with your doctor and follow it for the rest of your life.

If you find a lump or see other changes in your breast, see your doctor right away.

How is a mammogram done?

Mammograms are quick and easy. You simply stand in front of an x-ray machine. The person who takes the x-rays places your breast between two plastic plates. The plates press your breast and make it flat. This may be uncomfortable for a few seconds, but it helps get a clear picture. You will have x-rays taken of each breast. A mammogram takes only a few seconds.

Where can I get a mammogram?

To find out where you can get a mammogram:

- Ask your doctor or nurse.

- Ask your local health department or clinic.

- Call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at **1-800-4-CANCER** (1-800-422-6237).

Medicare helps pay for yearly mammograms. For Medicare information, call 1-800-638-6833.

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call the National Cancer Institute's
Cancer Information Service at
1-800-4-CANCER
(1-800-422-6237).
People with TTY equipment,
dial **1-800-332-8615**.

Visit NCI's Web site for patients and
the public at
http://www.nci.nih.gov.

For Medicare information, call **1-800-638-6833**
or visit the Medicare Web site at
http://www.medicare.gov.

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